



PENNSYLVANIA MOUNTAINS HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE

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September 21, 2007

Commission's Secretary
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Rural Healthcare Pilot Program (WC-Docket No. 02-60): Amendment to the
Pennsylvania Mountains Healthcare Alliance Proposal (ECFS confirmation number:
200756493229)**

Dear Commission Secretary:

Please see the attached letter of support provided by Congressman John E. Peterson of Pennsylvania's 5th Congressional District, for the Rural Healthcare Pilot Program proposal submitted by the Pennsylvania Mountains Healthcare Alliance on May 7, 2007. We appreciate your consideration of this letter when reviewing our application.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Overdorf, MS
Network Clinical Director, PMHA
(814) 375-4691
pmharo@comcast.net

Enc: 1

Cc: Ms. Erika Olsen
Mr. Thomas Buckley
Mr. Jeremy Marcus
Mr. Ronald Butler
Mr. Joseph Gribik, Jr.

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3805

September 19, 2007

Ms. Rebecca Overdorf, MS
Network Clinical Director, PMHA
P. O. Box 572
DuBois, Pennsylvania 15801

Dear Ms. Overdorf:

Please allow me to voice my strong support of Pennsylvania Mountain Healthcare Alliance's (PMHA) application to participate in the pilot program of the Federal Communications Commission (WC Docket No. 02-60) for rural health care funding to construct and deploy a dedicated network to support telemedicine services in an 18-county region of rural Pennsylvania.

PMHA covers the mountainous region on the eastern edge of the northern Appalachian Mountain range. The primary service areas of the PMHA member hospitals exceed 600,000 people and cover 18 counties, representing nearly 1/3 of the Commonwealth geographically. Member hospitals are located in counties characterized by poverty, low levels of income, and unemployment. Furthermore, all 11 PMHA counties have median household income levels that are significantly less than the state average; and, all of the counties except one have poverty and unemployment rates that are higher than the state average.

PMHA is pursuing construction and deployment of a dedicated network to facilitate collaborative telemedicine efforts among its member hospitals. This will increase efficiency and quality of existing telemedicine efforts, address health care professional capacity issues, improve the quality of care delivered, and reduce the long-term costs of delivering care. Objectives of this initiative include increased capacity of existing network connections at PMHA hospitals and provision of the network infrastructure to support the implementation of PMHA's data and voice communications plan, a consortium-wide tele-pharmacy project, expansion of various other applications of telemedicine, including tele-radiology, and initiation of collaborative health education efforts.

Projects such as this are literally the life-line to patients living in remote, underserved rural communities, especially during the long winter months when travel can be very hazardous. In order to greatly improve the quality of care for residents of this vast area, I respectfully request that PMHA's application be given very serious and thoughtful consideration.

Ms. Rebecca Overdorf, MS
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As always, if I may be of assistance to you in any way with this important project, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John E. Peterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

John E. Peterson
Member of Congress

JEP/pca